



1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED AND DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Charleston District, Regulatory Division, is evaluating a permit application from the South Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Public Railways d/b/a Palmetto Railways (Palmetto Railways or the Applicant) that will require a Department of the Army (DA) permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA)¹⁸ and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act¹⁹. Palmetto Railways proposes to construct a state-of-the-art Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF) at the former Charleston Naval Complex (CNC) to facilitate the transfer of international cargo containers from ships at port facilities to trucks and/or rail (e.g., trains). The Proposed Project, also referred to as the Navy Base Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (Navy Base ICTF), would provide equal access to the Class I rail carriers (CSX

Intermodal Container Transfer Facility:
Location where containerized cargo is transferred from one mode of transport (such as truck) to another mode (such as rail).

Transportation [CSX] and Norfolk Southern Railway [NS]) that serve the Port of Charleston (Port) and various local businesses and industries (see Figure 1.1-1). The proposed facility would be designed to accommodate existing and projected future intermodal container traffic within the region.

Palmetto Railways initially submitted a proposal to the Corps on September 27, 2013, and after several revisions, they submitted a revised proposal on September 8, 2015. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was released on April 29, 2016, and was based on the September 8, 2015, proposal. Palmetto Railways submitted an updated proposal in their DA permit application and mitigation plan in October 2016 and a Public Notice was issued. A revised mitigation plans were submitted in May and December 2017 (Appendix B). A detailed description of the Proposed Project is located in Section 1.7.

¹⁸ 33 U.S.C § 1344

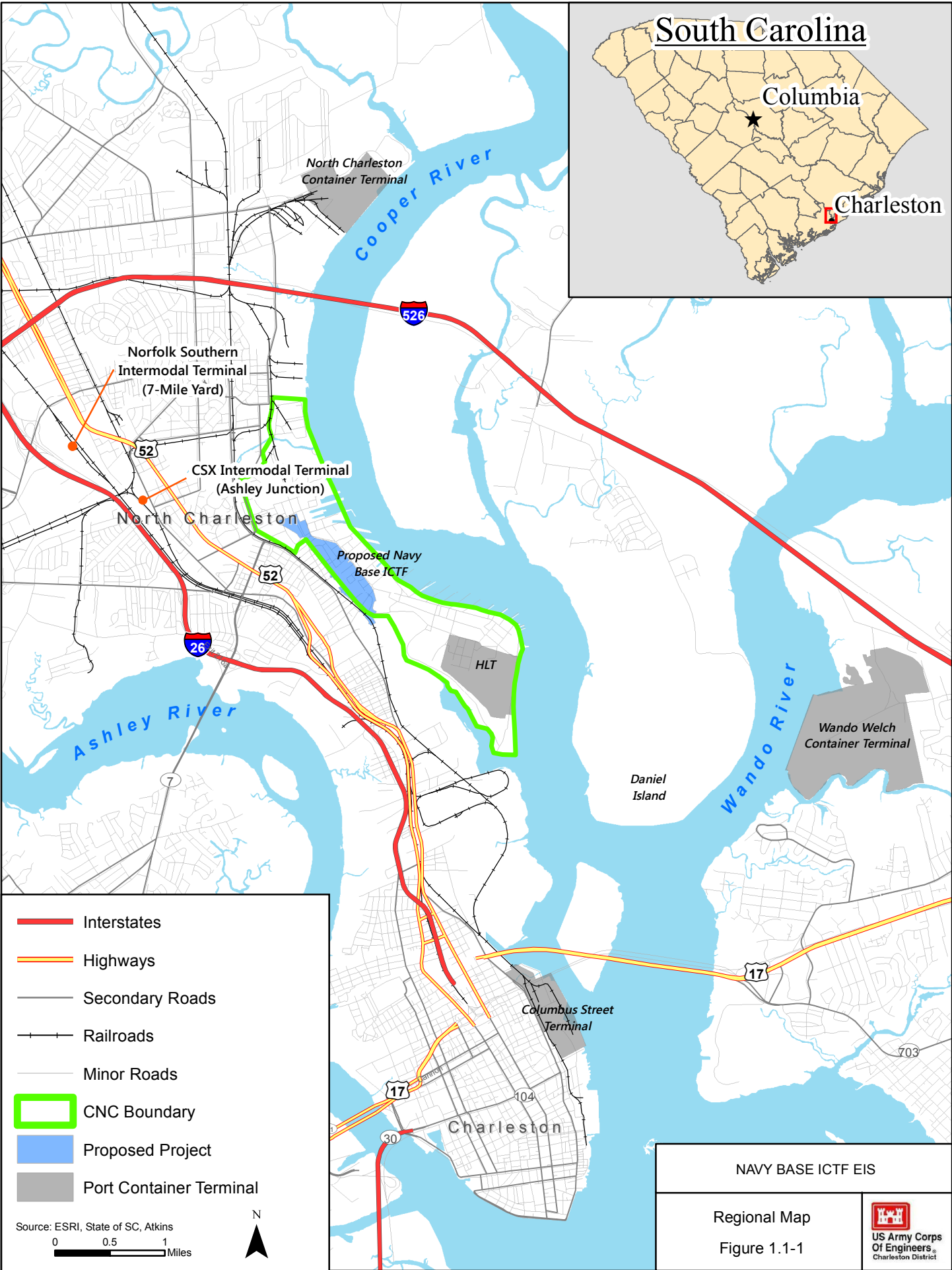
¹⁹ 33 U.S.C § 403

Equal access: The same, but independent, opportunity for approach and entry to the ICTF. In this case, CSX and NS would have “equal access” to the ICTF.

The Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr., Terminal (HLT) is a new 280-acre container terminal being constructed just south of the Navy Base ICTF. Intermodal containers that arrive at the HLT may be transported to the Navy Base ICTF or other destinations. In light of the ongoing construction and future operation of the HLT, and the future placements of the associated Port Access Road and Local Access Road; permitting the construction and operation of the Navy Base ICTF would have potentially significant impacts on the

quality of the human environment. As a result, the Corps determined that this was a major federal action that warranted the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4323 et seq.), and notified Palmetto Railways of this determination in a letter dated July 10, 2013. Accordingly, the Corps published a “Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement”²⁰ in the *Federal Register*, Volume 78, No. 205, on October 23, 2013. The Corps also issued a local notice notifying the public of the project, the intent to prepare an EIS, and the scheduling of a scoping meeting (held on November 14, 2013). The Corps determined that the changes to Palmetto Railways’ proposal in September 2015 were significant enough to warrant a new scoping meeting (held October 27, 2015) and a new scoping comment period to solicit additional public input on the revised project proposal.

²⁰ An EIS is not a Corps regulatory decision document. It is used by agency officials in conjunction with other relevant information in a permit application file, including public and agency comments on the Final EIS, to aid in the final permit decision.



South Carolina

Columbia

Charleston

Interstates

Highways

Secondary Roads

Railroads

Minor Roads

CNC Boundary

Proposed Project

Port Container Terminal

Source: ESRI, State of SC, Atkins
 0 0.5 1 Miles



NAVY BASE ICTF EIS

Regional Map

Figure 1.1-1

